**Amendments to the Claims**:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising:

metal oxide particles comprising ceria and zirconia; and

a noble metal carried by said metal oxide particles,

wherein said metal oxide particles have cores comprising larger molar amounts of zirconia than of ceria, and surface layers comprising larger molar amounts of ceria than of zirconia.

2. (Original) The catalyst according to claim 1 wherein the metal oxide particles have a mean particle diameter of 500 nm or less.

3. (Original) The catalyst according to claim 1 for purifying exhaust gas from an internal combustion engine.

4. (Currently Amended) The catalyst according to claim 1 ~~used at the temperature of~~ wherein the exhaust gas purifying catalyst is exposed to an environment having a temperature of 1,000°C or more.

5. (Original) The catalyst according to claim 1 wherein the molar ratio of Zr:Ce in the metal oxide particles is 1:0.5 to 0.5:1.

6. (Original) The catalyst according to claim 1 further comprising one or more metal oxides other than ceria and zirconia.

7. (Currently Amended) The catalyst according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 6 wherein the molar ratio of (Zr and Ce):(the metal(s) of the one or more metal oxides other than ceria and zirconia~~metals~~) is 5:1 to 20:1.

8. (Original) The catalyst according to claim 1 wherein the ceria covers more than 80 mol% of the surface of the metal oxide particles, as measured by the transmission

electron microscope and energy dispersive X-ray analyzer.

9. (Original) The catalyst according to claim 1 wherein the zirconia composes more than 80 mol% of the cores of metal oxide particles, as measured by the transmission electron microscope and energy dispersive X-ray analyzer.

10. (Original) Metal oxide particles having cores comprising larger molar amounts of zirconia than of ceria, and surface layers comprising larger molar amounts of ceria than of zirconia.

11. (Original) The metal oxide particles according to claim 10 carrying a noble metal.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing metal oxide particles, ~~with~~ said metal oxide particles having cores comprising larger molar amounts of zirconia than of ceria, and surface layers comprising larger molar amounts of ceria than of zirconia, wherein the method comprises:

preparing a solution comprising zirconia sol and ceria sol;

adjusting the pH of the solution within ±0.5 on the basis of the isoelectric point of zirconia; and

aggregating zirconia and then aggregating ceria around the aggregated zirconia from said solution to make aggregates.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 12 further comprising drying and firing the aggregates.

14. (Original) The method according to claim 12 wherein the metal oxide particles have a mean particle diameter of 500 nm or less.

15. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 12 wherein the molar ratio of Zr:Ce in the metal oxide ~~particle~~ particles is 1:0.5 to 0.5:1.

16. (New) The catalyst according to claim 1 wherein the metal oxide particles have a mean particle diameter of 50 nm or less.

17. (New) The method according to claim 12 wherein the metal oxide particles have a mean particle diameter of 50 nm or less.

18. (New) The method according to claim 12 wherein the aggregation is achieved by concentrating the solution.

19. (New) The method according to claim 18 wherein the concentrating of the solution is conducted by removing and drying out the solvent.